

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 127788
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO ALL DIPLOMATIC POSTS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA NIACT IMMEDIATE
USICA WASDC IMMEDIATE
USCINCEUR VAINGEN IMMEDIATE
CINCLANT NORFOLK IMMEDIATE
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN IMMEDIATE
DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
CINCPAC HONOLULU IMMEDIATE
CINCMAC SCOTT AFB IMMEDIATE
JCS WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0000
SAC OFFUTT NEBRASKA IMMEDIATE
REDCOM MACDILL AFB FLA IMMEDIATE
COMJTF7A FORT BRAG G IMMEDIATE
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PRAIA IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 127788

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS:MOPS, PINS, CG, FR, BE

SUBJECT: EXCERPTS FROM WHITE HOUSE BRIEFING MAY 19
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 STATE 127788

FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM WHITE HOUSE BRIEFING ON
SHA0A SITUATION FRIDAY, MAY 19, 12:25 P.M. EDT.
BEGIN TEXT:

MR. POWELL: I HAVE A SHORT ANNOUNCEMENT TO MAKE AND
THEN I WILL BE GLAD TO TAKE WHAT QUESTIONS YOU HAVE ON
THAT PARTICULAR SUBJECT.

THE BELGIAN AND FRENCH GOVERNMENTS TOGETHER WITH THE
GOVERNMENT OF ZAIRE HAVE ASKED THE UNITED STATES FOR

LOGISTICAL SUPPORT IN CONNECTION WITH OPERATIONS WHICH THE BELGIANS AND THE FRENCH ARE UNDERTAKING TO PROTECT FOREIGN NATIONALS IN THE AREA OF KOLWEZI AND SHABA PROVINCE, ZAIRE. TO CARRY OUT THIS OPERATION, THE BELGIAN AND FRENCH GOVERNMENTS HAVE ASKED US TO PROVIDE AIRLIFT SUPPORT TO DESTINATIONS IN ZAIRE OUTSIDE THE AREA OF CONFLICT.

WE HAVE AGREED TO THOSE REQUESTS AND OUR SUPPORT OPERATIONS ARE NOW IN PROGRESS.
I WILL BE GLAD TO RESPOND TO QUESTIONS.

Q: WILL THERE BE ANY ESCORT AIRCRAFT BESIDES CARGO-TYPE PLANES?

MR. POWELL: THE ONLY AIRCRAFT INVOLVED, TO MY KNOWLEDGE, ARE C-141S.

Q: HOW MANY?

MR. POWELL: THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY, AS I UNDERSTAND IT, EIGHT AIRCRAFT INVOLVED IN SUPPORT OF THE BELGIANS AND UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 127788

TEN IN SUPPORT OR IN RESPONSE TO THE FRENCH REQUEST.

Q. WHAT IS THE CARGO? AMERICAN PILOTS, AMERICAN CREWS?

MR. POWELL. THAT IS CORRECT.

Q: WHAT IS THE CARGO?

MR. POWELL: THE BELGIANS HAVE REQUESTED AND WE HAVE AGREED TO TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT FUEL FROM KINSHASA TO KAMINA AIRFIELD WHICH IS LOCATED ABOUT 130 MILES NORTH OF KOLWEZI.

THE BELGIANS HAVE ALSO REQUESTED AND WE HAVE AGREED TO TRANSPORT A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF AMMUNITION OF BELGIAN MANUFACTURE FROM BRUSSELS, OR FROM BELGIUM TO KINSHASA.

THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT HAS ASKED US TO TRANSPORT A CERTAIN NUMBER OF PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT, THE EQUIPMENT BEING COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLES, THE PERSONNEL DRIVERS AND SUPPORT PERSONNEL FOR THOSE VEHICLES FROM CORSICA TO AN AIRFIELD IN ZAIRE WHICH IS OUTSIDE THE AREA OF CONFLICT. WE HAVE ALSO AGREED TO THOSE REQUESTS.

Q: WHY DID THE BELGIANS AND FRENCH HAVE TO REQUEST THIS OF US? WHY DIDN'T THEY DO IT WITH THEIR OWN PLANES?

MR. POWELL: I DON'T KNOW THE DETAILS OF THEIR CAPABILI-

TIES VIS-A-VIS OURS. THEY ASKED US TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE. OBVIOUSLY WE SHARE AN INTEREST BOTH IN THE HUMANITARIAN ASPECTS IN THAT AREA AND IN OTHERS.

Q: WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CONGRESS ON THIS?

MR. POWELL: YOU WILL HAVE TO TALK TO STATE ABOUT THE DETAILS OF CONSULTATION. HOWEVER, OF COURSE WE HAVE BEEN UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 STATE 127788

CONSULTING WITH CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP ON THIS MATTER.

Q: COULD YOU TELL US WHAT THE STATUS OF THESE AIRCRAFT IS AT THE PRESENT TIME? ARE THEY ALREADY IN SERVICE?

MR. POWELL: SUPPORT OPERATIONS HAVE BEGUN. I DO NOT HAVE DETAILS ON THE AIRCRAFT, WHERE THEY ARE, WHICH HAVE LANDED, WHICH HAVE TAKEN OFF, AND SO FORTH. YOU WILL HAVE TO GO TO THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT ON THAT. THIS IS A MILITARY OPERATION AND I DON'T KNOW HOW DETAILED THEY WISH TO BE ABOUT DESTINATIONS AND ARRIVAL TIMES, AND SO FORTH. YOU WILL HAVE TO KEEP TRACK OF THAT WITH THEM.

Q: WHERE ARE THEY COMING FROM?

MR. POWELL: YOU WILL HAVE TO ASK DEFENSE WHERE THEY WERE ORIGINALLY BASED.

Q: I'M NOT SURE WHETHER YOU ARE SAYING C-141S WILL BE FLYING INTO OR OUT OF COMBAT ZONES, OR WHAT?

MR. POWELL: I SAID THEY WOULD NOT. THEY ARE FLYING INTO, ONE, KAMINA, WHICH IS OUTSIDE THE AREA OF CONFLICT AND TWO, ALSO TO KINSHASA WITH THE BELGIAN AMMUNITION, AND THREE, FROM CORSICA TO AN AIRFIELD WHICH I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO DISCLOSE AT THIS POINT, WHICH IS OUTSIDE THE AREA OF CONFLICT. PLEASE DON'T HOLD ME EXACTLY TO THE MILES HERE, BUT I UNDERSTAND IT IS ABOUT THE SAME DISTANCE, OR AT LEAST AS FAR FROM THE AREA OF CONFLICT AS IS KAMINA.

Q: WHERE WERE THESE PLANES BASED?

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 05 STATE 127788

MR. POWELL: YOU WILL HAVE TO DEAL WITH DEFENSE ON WHERE THE PLANES CAME FROM.

Q: BESIDES THE U.S. CREWS AND PERSONNEL CONNECTED WITH THESE AIRPLANES, ARE THERE ANY OTHER U.S. PERSONNEL

CONNECTED WITH THIS RESCUE OPERATION IN SOME OTHER PLACE OR CAPACITY?

MR. POWELL: WHEY YOU SAY "ANOTHER PLACE", YOU MEAN IN ZAIRE?

Q: YES.

MR. POWELL: OKAY. LET ME PUT IT THIS WAY, WHICH MAY BE A MORE SPECIFIC WAY OF ANSWERING YOUR QUESTION. THE ONLY PLACE THAT WE WILL BE PUTTING PEOPLE ON THE GROUND WILL BE PERHAPS A DOZEN OR LESS PEOPLE IN KAMINA WHO WILL BE

THERE SIMPLY TO MAINTAIN OUR COMMUNICATIONS THERE AND THE EQUIPMENT THAT IS REQUIRED PRIMARILY FOR THE OFF-LOADING OF THE FUEL.

THE ONLY OTHER AMERICANS, AS I UNDERSTAND IT, WILL BE IN AND OUT WITH THE AIRPLANES.

Q: I UNDERSTAND THAT THE SECURITY OF KAMINA IS SOMEWHAT QUESTIONABLE OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS. IS THERE ANY PROVISION FOR PROVIDING SOME SORT OF DEFENSIVE CAPABILITIES FOR AMERICAN EQUIPMENT AND PERSONNEL THERE?

MR. POWELL: I DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU GET YOUR REPORTS ON THE SECURITY OF KAMINA. IF THERE IS, IN FACT, A THREAT OF HOSTILITIES IN AND AROUND KAMINA, WE WILL DEAL WITH THAT. THERE IS NOT SUCH A THREAT NOW, TO MY KNOWLEDGE. WE DO NOT HAVE PLANS TO PLACE AMERICAN PERSONNEL ON THE GROUND IN A ROLE OF PROTECTING OR COMBAT UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 06 STATE 127788

PERSONNEL AT ALL IN THIS OPERATION. THE SECURITY OF THESE AREAS THAT WE ARE GOING TO AT THIS POINT IS ADEQUATELY TAKEN CARE OF.

Q: HOW CAN YOU PROTECT THE SECURITY OF THESE PLANES WITH ONLY 21 PEOPLE ON THE GROUND?

MR. POWELL: AS YOU KNOW, WE ARE NOT THE ONLY PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THIS OPERATION. THE FRENCH, BELGIANS, THE UNITED STATES, AND ZAIRE ARE ALSO INVOLVED. IF YOU WANT TO KNOW THE DETAILS -- FRANKLY, I DON'T THINK IT WOULD DO MUCH GOOD TO INQUIRE INTO THE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS AT THESE PARTICULAR LOCATIONS, BUT SUFFICE IT TO SAY WE CONSIDER THEM TO BE SATISFACTORY AND WE DO NOT FEEL THE NEED, AND WE HAVE NO PLANS, TO PLACE AMERICAN COMBAT FORCES IN ZAIRE TO PROTECT EVEN AS A SECURITY MEASURE FOR THE AIR FORCE.

Q: DOES THIS INVOLVE ANY CONGRESSIONAL ACTION OF ANY

KIND?

MR. POWELL: NO, THIS DOES NOT COME UNDER THE WAR POWERS ACT, IF I INTERPRET YOUR QUESTION CORRECTLY.

Q: ARE THE PLANES UNARMED, AND ALSO ANYTHING ELSE ON THE CARGO?

MR. POWELL: WELL, I THINK I HAVE DESCRIBED THE CARGO TO YOU AS ACCURATELY AS POSSIBLE. IT INCLUDES AMMUNITION GOING TO KINSHASA, JET FUEL GOING TO KAMINA, AND VEHICLES,

AND COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT GOING TO ANOTHER LOCATION FROM CORSICA. AND THAT DESCRIBES THE MATERIEL.
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 07 STATE 127788

Q: ARE THE PLANES UNARMED?

MR. POWELL: SO FAR AS I KNOW THERE IS NO PROVISION FOR ARMING A C-141. IT IS A TRANSPORT. I THINK IT IS ASSUMED THAT PEOPLE ON THE GROUND WOULD NORMALLY CARRY SIDEARMS.

Q: THE FRENCH DRIVERS AND PERSONNEL, THESE ARE FRENCH MILITARY PERSONNEL YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT?

MR. POWELL: I ASSUME THEY ARE, BUT I CANNOT --

Q: ARE THE AMERICAN PLANES INVOLVED IN THE MOVEMENT OF FRENCH COMBAT TROOPS AT ALL?

MR. POWELL: SO FAR AS I KNOW, WE ARE NOT, BUT --

Q: THESE ARE COMBAT EQUIPMENT, AREN'T THEY?

MR. POWELL: THE QUESTION WAS COMBAT TROOPS. OBVIOUSLY, AMMUNITION IS COMBAT EQUIPMENT. THERE IS ALMOST NOTHING ELSE YOU CAN USE IT FOR.

Q: AND THE DRIVERS OF THE COMBAT VEHICLES WOULD BE PERHAPS ANTI-PERSONNEL AND THINGS LIKE THAT?

MR. POWELL: I DON'T KNOW. THAT IS A GOOD POINT.

Q: WILL THIS BE A SHUTTLE OPERATION? WILL THEY BE IN THE AIR FLYING FOR DAYS OR IS THIS JUST A ONE-SHOT TRIP?

MR. POWELL: THE ONLY WAY I CAN ANSWER THAT IS THAT WE HAVE SPECIFIC REQUESTS FOR TRANSPORTING SPECIFIC TYPES OF EQUIPMENT IN SPECIFIC AMOUNTS TO SPECIFIC AREAS. I DO NOT KNOW WHETHER MORE THAN ONE FLIGHT WILL BE IN-
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 08 STATE 127788

VOLVED OR SO FORTH OR ANY OF THE PLANES WILL BE TURNED AROUND. THOSE ARE LOGISTICAL THINGS YOU WILL HAVE TO DISCUSS WITH THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT. WE ARE DEALING NOT WITH AN OPEN-ENDED REQUEST, BUT --

MR. SCHECTER: IN ANSWER TO BOB'S QUESTION, THEY ARE STANDARD TRUCKS AND VEHICLES, THEY ARE NOT COMBAT VEHICLES IN THE SENSE THAT THEY ARE NOT ARMORED VEHICLES.

Q: BUT THE QUESTION THAT THIS GENTLEMAN ASKED, WHICH HAS

NEVER BEEN ANSWERED, IS A VERY IMPORTANT ONE, ARE WE TRANSPORTING PEOPLE INTO COMBAT? AND IF WE ARE SENDING DOWN EQUIPMENT AND DRIVERS AND COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT, WHICH IS PRESUMABLY COMBAT, IT IS OPERATED BY THE PERSONNEL WE ARE ALSO SENDING.

MR. POWELL: IF YOU ARE ASKING ME IS THERE A POSSIBILITY THAT THESE PERSONNEL -- I THINK THERE ARE 120 OF THEM OR SOME ODD -- MAY BE INVOLVED IN COMBAT, THAT IS, THAT THEY MAY GET SHOT AT, OBVIOUSLY THERE IS THAT POSSIBILITY, YES. NOW, AND WE ASSUME THERE ARE FRENCH MILITARY PEOPLE, BUT THEY ARE ASSOCIATED WITH DRIVING AND MAINTAINING THESE VEHICLES.

OBVIOUSLY, YOU KNOW, I DON'T SEE THE --

Q: IS IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT THEY WILL BE USED SOLELY IN THE EVACUATION OF FOREIGNERS?

MR. POWELL: THAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE MISSION IS TO EXTRACT AND PROTECT FOREIGN NATIONALS THERE. AS TO THE DETAILS OF HOW THAT IS BEING DONE, YOU WILL HAVE TO UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 09 STATE 127788

TALK TO FRENCH AND BELGIAN.

Q: IS IT CONTEMPLATED WE WILL HAVE ANY MEDICAL PERSONNEL ANYWHERE IN ZAIRE THAT WOULD BE ABLE TO HELP --

MR. SCHECTER: THE BRITISH HAVE ANNOUNCED THEY ARE GOING TO HAVE SOME.

Q: HAS THERE BEEN ANY DIFFICULTY IN OBTAINING OVERFLIGHT PERMISSION FOR THE ROUTES THESE PLANES WILL BE TAKING?

MR. POWELL: I AM NOT AWARE OF ANY.

MR. SCHECTER: NO.

Q: DID THE FRENCH AND BELGIANS ASK FOR ANY ASSISTANCE
YOU WERE NOT ABLE TO PROVIDE?

MR. POWELL: I THINK WE MET THE REQUESTS WE WERE GIVEN.

Q: WILL THESE PLANES BE USED TO EVACUATE CIVILIANS FROM
--

MR. POWELL: THAT IS NOT THE REQUEST AND THERE ARE NO
PLANS FOR THAT AT THIS POINT. MY UNDERSTANDING IS THEY
HAVE INDICATED THEY ARE PREPARED TO DO EVACUATION WITH

THEIR OWN EQUIPMENT OR WITH THEIR OWN ARRANGEMENTS.

Q: IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT ONCE THESE PLANES MAKE
THEIR DELIVERIES TO THE THREE LOCATIONS, THEY WILL THEN
LEAVE, IS THAT RIGHT, THE AIRCRAFT THEMSELVES, ONCE THE
FUEL IS OFFLOADED?

MR. POWELL: ALL I CAN SAY IS THE PURPOSE OF THE OPERA-
TION IS TO BRING THE FUEL, THE EQUIPMENT, SO FORTH, THERE,
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 10 STATE 127788

AND THAT IS WHAT WE ARE DOING. I DON'T KNOW OF ANY REA-
SON WHY THEY WOULD BE HANGING AROUND AFTERWARDS.

Q: WE UNDERSTAND IT WOULD TAKE A SPECIFIC REQUEST TO GET
THEM BACK, SPECIFIC REQUEST FOR SEPCIFIC EQUIPMENT TO
A SPECIFIC PLACE GOING BEYOND THIS ORDER?

MR. POWELL: WELL, IF WE GOT INVOLVED IN SOMETHING ELSE--
AND I HATE TO EVEN RAISE THAT AS A HYPOTHETICAL THING--
YES, IT WOULD BE SOMETHING IN WHICH WE WOULD HAVE TO BE
ASKED TO DO AND AGREED TO DO. WE HAVE AGREED TO DO SOME
SPECIFIC THINGS WHICH ARE TO ACT IN SUPPORT OF THIS
OPERATION.

THE PRESS: THANK YOU.

Q: HERE IS THE QUESTION, PLEASE. IT IS A SERIOUS
QUESTION. HAS CASTRO IN FACT NOTIFIED US THAT NO CUBAN
PERSONNEL ARE OPERATING IN ZAIRE? AND IF HE HAS, DO
WE BELIEVE HIM?

MR. POWELL: WELL, I WILL NOT GET INTO SPECIFICS ON WHAT
MR. CASTRO MIGHT HAVE SAID. I CAN SAY WE HAVE NO CON-
FIRMATION OF CUBANS BEING INVOLVED IN MILITARY OPERATIONS
IN ZAIRE. HOWEVER, I SHOULD ALSO ADD THAT WE DO KNOW
THAT THE CUBANS DID TRAIN AND EQUIP THE KATANGANS WHO
ARE ENGAGED IN THOSE MILITARY OPERATIONS AND THAT THEY
ARE FIGHTING WITH SOVIET AND EASTERN EUROPEAN WEAPONS

SUPPLIED TO THEM BY CUBANS IN ANGOLA.

Q: SUPPLIED TO THEM WHAT?

MR. POWELL: BY CUBANS IN ANGOLA.
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 11 STATE 127788

Q: JODY, DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT OR REACTION TO MURRAY MARDER'S STORY THIS MORNING ON ADMINISTRATION ATTEMPTS FOR THE LAST COUPLE OF MONTHS TO FUNNEL U.S. WEAPONS TO SOME OF THESE GROUPS FIGHTING IN ANGOLA?

MR. POWELL: I DON'T THINK HE EVEN WENT THAT FAR.

OBVIOUSLY, WE ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO COMMENT ON SPECULATION ABOUT COVERT OPERATIONS. WE JUST HAVEN'T DONE THAT. THAT SHOULDN'T BE TAKEN TO INFER ANYTHING ONE WAY OR THE OTHER, BUT THE OTHER THING THAT SHOULD BE OBVIOUS IS THAT WE HAVE AND WILL CONTINUE TO FULLY ABIDE BY THE LAW. ANY IMPLICATIONS TO THE CONTRARY ARE COMPLETELY WITHOUT ANY FOUNDATION.

Q: I DON'T THINK HE MADE THAT IMPLICATION.

MR. POWELL: WELL, GO BACK AND READ IT.

Q: WHAT MURRAY WAS SAYING IS YOUR PRE-OCCUPATION WITH THE CLARK AMENDMENT IS SIMPLY THAT, THAT IT IS ANGOLA AND POSSIBLY WANTING TO HELP UNITA CARRY ON ITS GUERRILLA ACTIVITY THERE, IS WHAT YOU ARE INTERESTED IN?

MR. POWELL: I THINK I HAVE MADE IT CLEAR AND I HAVE TRIED TO AVOID PEOPLE FROM TRYING TO FOCUS OUR CONCERN ABOUT RESTRICTIONS ON THE PRESIDENT'S ABILITY TO EFFECTIVELY CONDUCT AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY SIMPLY ON ZAIRE AND ANGOLA. THAT IS NOT THE CASE. AS THE STATE DEPT. POINTED OUT A COUPLE OF DAYS AGO, THE CLARK AMENDMENT IS ONE OF THOSE AREAS THAT WE WOULD BE LOOKING AT. BUT IT IS CERTAINLY NOT THE ONLY ONE, AND IT CERTAINLY SHOULDN'T BE SINGLED OUT. WHEN WE GET THROUGH WITH THIS REVIEW, WE WILL TELL YOU WHAT WE CONCLUDED. AND IF IT INVOLVES ASKING CONGRESS TO TAKE SOME ADDITIONAL ACTION, WE ASK
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 12 STATE 127788

THEM. AND THIS REVIEW IS BEING CARRIED OUT IN CONSULTATION WITH THE CONGRESS.

Q: SINCE THE SPOKANE REMARKS ABOUT THE COMMUNICATION WITH BREZHNEV, HAVE THERE BEEN ANY ADDITIONAL COMMUNICATIONS WITH BREZHNEV ABOUT AFRICA?

MR. POWELL: I DO NOT KNOW.

Q: THIS IS A HOT WAR. IF THIS ESCALATES, WILL WE SEND
TROOPS OVER THERE? OBVIOUSLY THE RUSSIANS WILL NOT STOP.
IF YOU GO TO WAR, YOU WANT TO WIN.

MR. POWELL: WE DON'T HAVE ANY PLANS TO SEND ANY AMERICAN
COMBAT TROOPS TO ZAIRE.

Q: EVEN IF IT IS ESCALATED?

MR. POWELL: WE ARE JUST NOT PLANNING TO DO THAT. END
TEXT. VANCE

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